operations are carried out by the Government agencies (Food Corporation of India and State agencies) in districts all over the country where there is marketable surplus of foodgrains. Farmers have the option to sell their produce at MSP or in the open market, as is advantageous to them. This policy ensures that farmers get remunerative prices for their produce. This also enables the Government to procure foodgrains for servicing the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) and welfare schemes. Maintenance of a buffer stock of foodgrains to ensure food security is also one of the important obejctives of food policy.

Oilseeds production

1960. SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the rabi oilseeds production is projected to decline by 11.3 lakh tonnes this year, maintly due to fall in coverage of the crop by over 10 lakh hectares;

(b) if so, whether in the first trade estimate of rabi oilseed crops made by the Central Statistical Organisation for oil industry and trade, the production has been pegged to 91.4 lakh tonnes against 102.7 lakh tonnes last year;

(c) whether the overall production may fall by 20 lakh tonnes;

(d) if so, whether there would be shortage of oilseeds output in the country; and

(e) if so, the steps being taken to improve the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) As per the 2nd advance estimates released on 05-02-2007 by the Ministry, rabi oilseeds production for 2006-07 is estimated at 99.05 lakh tonnes compared to 112.11 lakh tonnes in 2005-06, showing a fall of 13.06 lakh tonnes. The area coverage under rabi oilseeds for 2006-07 is estimated at 91.74 lakh hectares compared to 104.94 lakh hectares in 2005-06, showing a fall of 13.20 lakh hectares.

(b) As per the information received from the Central Organization for Oil Industry and Trade (COOIT), the estimated rabi oilseeds production as on 27-01-2007 is 91.4 lakh tonnes for 2006-07 compared to 102.7 lakh tonnes for 2005-06.

(c) and (d) The total oilseeds production estimated by the Ministry stands at 236.19 lakh tonnes for 2006-07 as compared to 279.79 lakh tonnes for 2005-06, showing a fall of 43.60 lakh tonnes, thereby causing a demand-supply gap. The demand-supply gap is met through imports of edible oils.

(e) To increase the production of oilseeds in the country, a Centrally Sponsored Schemes "Integrated Scheme of Oilseeds, Pulses, Oil Palm and Maize" (ISOPOM) is under implementation since 01-04-2004 in several States. Under the scheme, financial assistances are provided for purchase of breeder seeds, production of foundation seeds, distribution of seed minikits, infrastructure development, weedicides, distribution of sprinkler sets and farmers training. To increase domestic availability, the Government resorts to changes in customs duty for import of edible oils.

Changes in the Seeds Bill, 2004

1961. SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether farmers have urged Government to follow the Parliamentary Panel's suggestions and effect necessary changes in the Seeds Bill, 2004 for ensuring farmers' rights;

(b) if so, whether Government have considered the views of the Parliamentary Standing Committee;

(c) whether any changes have been incorporated in the proposed Bill;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) by what time they are likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (e) The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture, to which the Bill was referred by the Hon'ble Speaker for examination and report, has submitted its report on 12th October, 2006. In pursufsfsance of the report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture, a Cabinet Note has ben prepared and circulated to concerned Ministries and Departments for their views and will be